

CLAIMS

1. A process for producing a vegetable product, comprising the steps of:
 - a) crushing, chopping or slicing a vegetable into pieces of 1 to 30 mm;
 - 5 b) before or after step a) blanching the vegetable pieces at a temperature of 60 to 90°C;
 - c) holding the blanched vegetable pieces in the presence of an endo-acting pectinase activity at a temperature from 60 to 90°C; and
 - d) optionally blending the macerated vegetable pieces.
- 10 2. The process of any of the preceeding claims wherein the endo-acting pectinase activity is selected from the list comprising pectate lyase, polygalacturonase, pectin lyase, pectin methyl esterase and pectin acetyl esterase.
- 15 3. The process of any of the preceeding claims wherein the pectate lyase is derived from a strain of *bacillus* sp., such as a strain of *B. licheniformis* or *Bacillus subtilis*.
- 20 4. The process of any of the preceeding claims wherein the pectate lyase is derived from a strain of *bacillus* sp., such as from a strain of *Bacillus licheniformis*, such as a pectate lyase having an amino acid sequence having at least 50% homology to the amino acid sequence shown in ID NO:1
- 25 5. The process of any of the preceeding claims wherein the pectate lyase is derived from a strain of *bacillus* sp., such as from a strain of *Bacillus subtilis*, and preferably a pectate lyase having an amino acid sequence having at least 50% homology to the amino acid sequence shown in SEQ ID NO:2.
- 30 6. The process of any of the preceeding claims wherein the vegetable is a root vegetable such as a carrot, celery, beetroot, radish, horse-radish; or a fruit vegetable such as an apple, pear, mango, grape, tomato, citrus (orange, lemon, lime, mandarin), prune, cherry, paprika, cucumbers, and pumpkins; or a leaf and flower vegetable like pineapple, onion, spinach, cabbage, and cauliflower.
7. The process of any of the preceeding claims wherein the vegetable is a carrot.